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State Agricultural Officials Tout Benefits of Local Cheese and Wine  
*Producers Help Preserve Open Space and Generate Tourism Revenue for Massachusetts*

BOSTON – The phrase “wine and cheese” conjures up images of the French countryside, but both commodities are making a strong showing right here in Massachusetts.

Bay State farmers make over 600,000 pounds of cheese per year, generating more than \$1 million in sales, according to the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR). Meanwhile, 26 Bay State wineries produce some 200,000 gallons of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and other varieties annually – making Massachusetts the number two wine-producing state in New England.

In urging consumers to purchase local cheeses and wines, DAR Acting Commissioner Scott Soares points out that supporting Massachusetts wine and cheese producers helps preserve thousands of acres of open space and keeps revenue within the state. Sales from Massachusetts wineries more than doubled since 1994, and DAR expects the approximately \$6.53 million generated annually from Massachusetts wine sales to increase by \$750,000 per year, reaching \$10.2 million in 2010. Nearly three-quarters of Massachusetts winery sales are direct sales to consumers, fueled by approximately 100,000 winery visitors per year – up to 40 percent of them out-of-state tourists.

Wines produced in Massachusetts range from Chardonnay and Pinot Gris to Gewurztraminer, Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc, Reisling, Vidal Blanc and Cayuga. Charlton's Obadiah McIntyre Farm Winery won two Gold Medals in this year's Second Annual Big E Northeast Gold Wine Competition for its 2006 Crimson Gold Red Raspberry and 2006 Cherry Wine. The wines and awards were showcased as part of Massachusetts Day at The Big E in West Springfield last week.

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Soares noted that Massachusetts wineries support preservation of 1,862 acres of open space, including 470 acres devoted to growing grapes and other fruits. Another 730 acres are maintained as open space thanks to Massachusetts' farmstead cheese industry. Approximately 24,500 gallons of milk from more than 400 cows and 180 goats go into making varieties of Massachusetts cheese such as Camembert, Blue, Cheddar, Gouda and Chevre.

For more information about Massachusetts farmstead cheeses and wines, visit [www.mass.gov/massgrown](http://www.mass.gov/massgrown). Additional information on Massachusetts wineries is available from the newly-formed Massachusetts Farm Wineries & Growers Association: [www.masswinery.com](http://www.masswinery.com).

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